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ably good must come and as the years go by who shall say that America may not eventually repay her debt fourfold.

CONSERVATION

The keynote of the joint sessions of the American Civic Association and the National Municipal League held in Cincinnati in November, was "conservation," a word which, as Dr. Charles W. Eliot has remarked, has of late taken on new meaning and significance. The necessity for restricting the wasteful use of public commodities such as coal, timber, phosphate, water, lest the supply become exhausted, seems logical in the extreme and scarcely open to argument; by the people of the country such a policy is understood and endorsed. These are the things which go to make life not merely tolerable but possible. On the other hand, however, the question of conserving the beauty of the country, which is to the welfare of the people no less vitally important if less essential, is met with an evident decrease of interest and enthusiasm. Niagara has been partially saved through the energetic watchfulness of a few; that the wonders of the Yellowstone have not been destroyed by sheer wantonness is thanks to the military guard which the government has placed over them. Because of its beauty alone, apart from scientific interest, no single spot in the United States has been set aside as a heritage for succeeding generations. And yet it is well understood that in nature is the source of art and that in the appreciation of beauty man attains the greatest heights. But laying aside the ethical and esthetic consideration, beauty may be regarded as a financial asset. Drain Niagara Falls and what would become of the hotels, the railways, and the souvenir shops adjacent? What is it that draws thousands of tourists annually to Switzerland—its famous cheeses or its magnificent mountain peaks? Is the Rhine sown with American dollars because it flows through Germany and past cities of some renown? No country is more richly endowed in this respect than America and if her resources

of natural beauty are judiciously conserved it is safe to prophesy that at no far distant time the stream of travel will be turned westward across the Atlantic. But in this country wherever man has gone he has despoiled the face of nature. In the far west where through irrigation the desert has been made to blossom like the rose and millions of wanderers have found homes little thought has been given to the question of beauty, utility serving as a crutch in its lieu; in the east as the population of great cities has crept out into the country no pains have been taken to conserve nature's free gifts—the loveliness of foliage, of little streams, of open skies. There is, of course, a beauty of the city as well as a beauty of the country, a beauty of orderliness, of usefulness, of purpose, but without the one it is probable that in time we shall cease to have the other. Switzerland has found it worth while to post notices along its highways calling the attention of the travelers to certain superior views lest blindly he pass them; France finds it the part of thrift to keep her roads in repair; Italy guards her traditions in landscape as she does her treasures of art. Good surroundings help, it has been found, to make good citizens. Pride in one's town, one's State, and one's country lend stability to patriotism. Beauty as a national asset is then by no means to be lightly esteemed, nor its conservation to be relegated to "a more convenient season." To art it means life, to the nation wealth, to man uplift and refreshment.

THE AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION.

One of the factors in the upbuilding of appreciation for beauty in this country is undoubtedly the American Civic Association, which has energetically for some years pressed the propaganda of civic improvement as regards external aspect, reacting upon sanitary conditions and general environment. In its activities it seems almost ubiquitous—lending a hand wherever and whenever apparently there is a need. It has vigilantly